



South Carolina Department of Agriculture

Hugh Weathers, Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fresh on the Menu Restaurants Selected *Southern Living's* Readers' Choice

COLUMBIA, SC – January 12, 2009 – Hugh Weathers, Commissioner of Agriculture, is pleased to announce that four Fresh on the Menu restaurants have been designated by *Southern Living* magazine as their Readers' Choice. Magnolia's Restaurant, Peninsula Grill, High Cotton Maverick Bar & Grill, and 82 Queen all in Charleston were featured winners in the January 2009 edition of *Southern Living* magazine.

More than 47,000 ballots were cast in the competition. In competition with other southern restaurants, the Fresh on the Menu dining establishments were chosen by readers who told the editors the best places to eat, shop, and stay all across the region.

Magnolia's Restaurant in Charleston was named in the top 10 restaurants for the Southern Favorite category. Magnolia's was also one of the top 10 restaurants in the Splurge Worthy category which also included Peninsula Grill, High Cotton Maverick Bar & Grill and 82 Queen all in Charleston.

Fresh on the Menu, the second phase of the Certified SC program, was launched in February 2008 by the South Carolina Department of Agriculture. Commissioner Weathers said, "Fresh on the Menu and all phases of the Certified South Carolina campaign have been established with one main objective – to increase the per capita income of rural South Carolinians through the generation of agricultural commerce. By providing consumers with the ability to easily identify, find, and buy South Carolina products, we are meeting that goal."

Participating chefs agree to prepare menus that include at least 25% Certified South Carolina Grown foods and products in season and feature Certified SC's Fresh on the Menu brand. These chefs recognize the value in supporting local for not only their bottom lines, but also for the difference South Carolina local products and produce make on the taste of food. After all, "Nothing's Fresher. Nothing's Finer."

Commissioner Weathers said, "Fresh on the Menu is a commitment to provide South Carolina citizens the freshest products and produce from some of the nation's best restaurants. This program will work to use our greatest resources to help to ensure that South Carolinians can act progressively and think competitively in the global economy of our future." The South Carolina Department of Agriculture challenges all South Carolinians to support, ask for and to remember to "Buy local." It's to dine for.

Southern Living magazine is published monthly and has a circulation of nearly 2.5 million. To vote for the 2009 Readers Choice Awards, visit www.southernliving.com. The winning Fresh on the Menu restaurants are:

- **82 Queen** - Johnny Williams, General Manager - 82 Queen Street, Charleston, SC 29401, 843-723-7591
- **High Cotton Maverick Bar & Grill** - Anthony Gray, Chef, 199 East Bay St., Charleston, SC 29401 843-724-3815
- **Magnolia's** - Donald Barickman, Executive Chef, 185 East Bay St., Charleston, SC 29401, 843-577-7771
- **Peninsula Grill** - Robert Carter, Chef, 112 N. Market St., Charleston, SC 29401, 843-579-1662

For more information about the Fresh on the Menu Program, contact Ansley Rast, 803-734-2200.

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